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TELEPHONE CALL FROM JOHN RUSSO, NEW JERSEY STATE DEPT. OF HEALTH

John Russo, New Jersey State Department of Health, called and asked for you but I took the call. He stated that on June 11, 1959 several members of his department were taking routine water samples in the Wayne-Pompton Plains area in New Jersey about 1/4 mile away from the Passaic Valley water shed. They noticed a milky white dispersion in the river, took some samples of it and had it analyzed. The alpha contamination was 3370 micro-microcuries per liter and the beta contamination was 1495 micro-microcuries per liter. Subsequent water samples taken at the same point (I believe he said <sup>at a point</sup> ~~at a point~~ where a brook and the Pompton River enter into the Passaic River) on November 5 revealed  $6 \times 10^{-5}$  microcuries per cc contamination. He also stated that other samples were taken on November 18 but had not been analyzed as yet. Approximately 1/4 mile away upstream is situated Rare Earths, Inc., affiliate of the Davison Chemical Company which is a Division of W. R. Grace & Son. <sup>(Letter is enclosed)</sup> A tour of this plant by Russo and his associates revealed that this company is processing monazite sand. He noted that they had approximately 9000 lbs. thorium oxide stored in their backyard and that when it rained, this material was being washed down into the river and probably resulting in the milky white slurry that was observed. He also stated that during a tour of the plant he noted that a milling operation was being performed and that thorium containing compounds were being heated under very high temperatures resulting in thoron gas.

He felt that we should take a look into this operation and I agreed. He added that this company had been taken to court last year, convicted and fined for general pollution of the area and the river surrounding the plant.

*Bob K. knows about this.*